



## Everyone is invited to walk the Aruba Way for the Red Cross

On Wednesday, May 18, leaders of the Aruba Way Foundation announced a donation and campaign to benefit the Red Cross of Aruba. During a press conference with a dual purpose, David Smith, Director of Community & Government Affairs for the Valero Refinery Aruba, introduced members of the Aruba Way, and also members past and present of the Board of the Red Cross to acquaint the public with a campaign being organized to assist them in their important work. One of the events the public is asked to join is a fun run walk to be held in June.

Aruba Way is a program initiated by Valero amongst their employees, which takes its name from the "United Way," and is prevalent at Valero Refineries throughout the U.S. Valero employees designate a portion of their salary to be collected in a fund, and Valero management matches the donations. These funds are then available to be distributed to various organizations on the island for worthwhile projects. On Wednesday, the recipients of a donation of 97,000 Aruban Florins (\$55,428 U.S.) was the board of the Red Cross, which will purchase a desperately need new ambulance. Accepting on behalf of the Red Cross was outgoing President of the Board, Erlinda Leysner, and Ryan Koolman as President elect Clyde Harms was unable to attend. This amount is enough to replace the second hand vehicles that they have from the Dutch Marines that are more than fifteen years old. Erlinda declared that the donation and acquisition of a new ambulance was a "dream come true" for the board members of the Red Cross.

As this year is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Red Cross in Aruba, the Aruba Way also announced further plans to assist in equipping the new ambulance properly. Andy Soekander, as leader of Aruba Way for 2006, along with Judela Jeandor proclaimed that a Fun Run/Walk will be held on Saturday evening June 10, around The Colony. The walk begins at 5:30 PM, and will begin at the main colony gate then finishing at the old International School. A five florin inscription fee per person will include refreshments at the finish line and a beautiful tee shirt. There will be prizes for groups such as the biggest group, most animated group and most disciplined group aside from some great door prizes. All proceeds will be donated to the Red Cross. The walk is being organized and conducted by the Arawak Walking Club, which was represented by Allrick Kock, who encouraged many to attend and participate for this good cause. Registration for the walk is at the gate at 4:30 on the day of the walk, and groups can pre-register by calling 592-3600, 592-7234, or 594-4142. Pre-registration is encouraged so adequate refreshments and fruit can be provided at the finish line.

David Smith announced that the actual check for the donation will be made at the Cas di Cultura on June 15, during the Red Cross Golden Jubilee Celebration, plus any additional funds collected from the walk. He also stated that Valero plans another campaign to hopefully top off the additional \$15,000 needed to equip the ambulance and ship it, of which the details will be announced in the near future.

Aruba's Chapter of the Red Cross consists of devoted volunteers that give selflessly of their time to assist the community. Their value to the community was particularly proven after the damage done by Hurricane Ivan two years ago, as it was their efforts that assisted displaced families in flooded areas. Valero and the Aruba Way appreciate the importance of the Red Cross to the community, and so should those that benefit from their diligent work. Valero Volunteers encourage the entire island to join in a pleasant walk through the colony on June 10 and walk the Aruba Way to assist this worthy cause!